



What is the United Methodist Church?

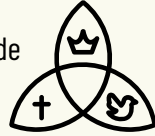
A community shaped by grace following Jesus together.

® The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

UNITED METHODIST BELIEFS

The United Methodist Church (UMC) is a worldwide connection that shares a great deal with other Christian denominations.

We believe God's grace is open to all, and therefore practice "open Communion"—meaning that anyone may participate in receiving Communion. We believe salvation is an open gift from God, accepted by individuals according to their own free will.



Like many other Christian groups, we affirm the beliefs expressed in the Apostles Creed. These include:

- The belief in one **God**, who is the Creator and sustainer of the universe.
- The belief in the **Trinity**, that there is one God in three persons: the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Holy Spirit**.
- The belief in the divinity of **Jesus Christ**, the Son of God, who is fully human and fully divine.

The United Methodist denomination is a "big tent" theologically, providing space for theological discourse and, at times, disagreement.²

SACRAMENTS

The United Methodist Church recognizes two sacraments, **baptism** and **communion**.



These two acts have a special place in the church because Jesus commanded them and participated in them.

- **Baptism** marks the beginning of our lifelong journey as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- **Communion** nourishes and sustains us on the journey.⁴

THE CONNECTION

Today, our denomination continues to be organized in a "connectional" system. Every local church is linked to an interconnected network of organizations that join together in mission and ministry, allowing us to accomplish far more than any one local church or person could alone.

Within the connectional structure of The United Methodist Church, conferences provide the primary groupings of people and churches for discernment and decision-making.

The **Virginia Conference** has eight districts. Your church is part of the **Mountain View** District.³



WESLEYAN HERITAGE

Methodism began because of **John Wesley**, his brother Charles, and others' desire to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. Together they pursued "holiness of heart and life," which Wesley described as "universal love filling the heart, and governing the life" (Advice to a People Called Methodist). **The dual emphasis on both what we believe and how we live, is essential to United Methodism today.**⁵



UMC VISION

The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, **love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously** in local communities and worldwide connections.¹



SOCIAL HOLINESS

The United Methodist Church has a long history of action and advocacy for social justice. United Methodists are active in their communities and in the world through a variety of ways, including:



- Participating in local mission projects and service initiatives
- Supporting global mission efforts through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and other mission organizations
- Advocating for social justice and working to address issues such as poverty, hunger, and inequality
- Providing educational and vocational training opportunities
- Offering counseling, support groups, and other forms of pastoral care
- Creating and supporting community development programs
- & more²

GRACE

Wesley taught that God's grace is with each of us throughout our lives. By grace God prepares us, justifies us, and then continues to grow us as followers of Jesus Christ.⁵



Learn more about the Mountain View District here: mountainviewdistrict.org

Learn more about the Virginia Conference here: vaumc.org

Learn more about the United Methodist Church here: umc.org

SOURCES:

¹ resourceumc.org/en/umc-resources/vision-of-the-umc

² umc.org/en/rethink-church/topics/questioning/what-is-a-united-methodist

³ umc.org/en/content/organization-church-as-connection

⁴ umc.org/en/who-we-are/ask-the-umc-faqs/sacraments

⁵ umc.org/en/content/our-wesleyan-heritage